



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 27, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.
SUBJECT: Approval of Standards for the Preparation of Paraprofessionals

In pursuit of Michigan's goal to meet the federal legislation mandating 100 percent proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics for all students by the 2013-2014 school year, a Paraprofessional Standards Referent group was established in the spring of 2004. This group developed a set of standards to be used as a guide or template for the preparation and professional development of paraprofessionals.

These standards articulate expectations for a quality paraprofessional as he/she assists in meeting the educational goals of our nation, and state and local communities. The Recommended Standards for Paraprofessional Preparation Programs are included as Attachment A.

Attachment B includes a listing of all Referent Group participants and organizations through which the recommended standards were distributed for comment.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Standards for the Preparation of Paraprofessionals, as identified in the Superintendent's memorandum dated September 27, 2004, and approve dissemination to the field.

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Recommended Standards for Paraprofessional Preparation Programs

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed the ESEA/No Child Left Behind Act. This federal legislation mandates 100 percent proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics for all students by the 2013-2014 school year. In support of this goal, this law also set qualification requirements for both teachers and paraprofessionals.

For the purpose of ESEA/NCLB, a paraprofessional is an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported by Title IA funds. This includes paraprofessionals who:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring;
- Assist with classroom management;
- Provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory;
- Conduct parental involvement activities;
- Provide support in a library or media center;
- Provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher.

As partners in the instructional process, paraprofessionals funded by Title IA funds are legally required to demonstrate the ability to support student learning in the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics. This is to be done through either the acquisition of post-secondary/higher education, formal state or local assessment.

Standards are set for the purpose of defining characteristics of quality for paraprofessionals. In support of these rigorous federal standards of quality for Title IA paraprofessionals, additional state standards are proposed as a more comprehensive representation of the impact of all paraprofessionals on education. They were developed and are recommended as a guide or template, for the preparation and professional development of this group of support personnel regardless of the funding source. They articulate expectations for a quality paraprofessional as he/she assists in meeting the educational goals of our nation, and state and local communities.

Michigan Paraprofessional Standards

Recommended by the State Board of Education

The following standards were developed and are recommended as a guide or template for the preparation and professional development of paraprofessionals regardless of the funding source. Under the supervision and guidance of a certified teacher, the paraprofessional will demonstrate the following knowledge and skills. These standards articulate expectations for a quality paraprofessional as he/she assists in meeting the educational goals of our nation, and state and local communities.

1. Human Growth and Development

Knowledge of the patterns of human physical, social, and cognitive development

Indicators:

- Understands and uses appropriate strategies for working with students of different age groups and abilities;
- Selects, develops and uses age-appropriate materials for instructional reinforcement;
- Recognizes signs of individual developmental differences in students and relates observations to the teacher.

2. Communication

Proficiency in a variety of techniques to communicate effectively in and beyond the classroom

Indicators:

- Communicates with colleagues, students, parents and other members of the community;
- Follows instructions, shares information, and uses interpersonal skills to be an effective member of the instructional team;
- Uses a variety of technological tools to communicate;
- Develops rapport with students.

3. Content Knowledge and Instructional Strategies

Knowledge in assigned content area and effective instructional strategies

Indicators:

- Demonstrates proficiency in assisting the instruction of reading, writing, math and other content areas;
- Uses age-appropriate strategies to support student achievement;
- Uses technology as an instructional tool.

Paraprofessional Standards Referent Group Members

Michigan Department of Education

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